

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 AID-05

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-10 /065 W

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O R 100520Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1752

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

DOD WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 0341

DOD PLEASE PASS TO VON MARBOD, PDASD (C) AND ASD (PA)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, VS, CB

SUBJECT: PRESS SPECULATION ON EMERGENCY MUNITION SHIPMENTS TO VIET NAM.

1. EMBASSY SAIGON HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS INQUIRIES REGARDING UPI BANGKOK DATELINE STORY OF JANUARY 9, TEXT OF WHICH FOLLOWS:

BEGIN QUOTE: BANGKOK--JANUARY 9--UPI--THE UNITED STATES IS REDUCING ITS STOCKPILE OF AMMUNITION IN THAILAND AND AT LEAST SOME OF THE AMMUNITION IS BEING SHIPPED TO SOUTH VIET-NAM, WHERE THE WAR HAS INTENSIFIED, A U.S. MILITARY SPOKESMAN SAID THURSDAY.

"WE DO NOT ROUTINELY SEND SHIPMENTS TO SOUTH VIET-NAM, BUT THERE IS SOME SHIPPING GOING ON NOW," THE SPOKESMAN SAID IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY FROM UPI.

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"THERE HAVE BEEN AND WILL BE SOME SHIPMENTS TO SOUTH

VIET-NAM THAT ARE THE RESULT OF A REDISTRIBUTION OF OUR AMMUNITION RESERVES THROUGHOUT THE PACIFIC AREA," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID HE BELIEVED THE SHIPMENTS TO SOUTH VIET-NAM CONSISTED OF BOMBS, MINES AND AMMUNITION FOR M-16 SMALL ARMS AND ARTILLERY, BUT HE COULD NOT GIVE SPECIFIC DETAILS ON THE ACTUAL SHIPMENTS.

THE SPOKESMAN WOULD NOT DESCRIBE THE SCALE OF THE REDISTRIBUTION PROGRAM, SAYING THAT THE SIZE OF THE AMMUNITION STOCKPILES IN THAILAND ARE CLASSIFIED. IT IS KNOWN, HOWEVER, THAT THE UNITED STATES KEEPS A SIGNIFICANTLY LARGE AMOUNT OF WAR MATERIEL IN THAILAND.

FOR EXAMPLE, REPORTERS VISITING UTAPAO AIR BASE, ABOUT 100 MILES SOUTH OF HERE SIX MONTHS AGO, WERE TOLD THAT BOMB STOCKPILES AT UTAPAO ALONE TOTAL 100,000 BOMBS CONTAINING 50 MILLION POUNDS OF EXPLOSIVES.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THE ORDER TO REDISTRIBUTE AMMUNITION IN THAILAND WAS GIVEN BECAUSE AMMO DEPOTS HERE WERE DESIGNED FOR THE 1965 LEVEL OF ACTIVITY. HE SAID THE DECISION WAS NOT TIED TO THE INTENSIFIED FIGHTING IN SOUTH VIET-NAM AND THAT THE DECISION WAS TAKEN IN RECENT MONTHS. END QUOTE.

2. WE HAVE RESPONDED TO QUERIES WHETHER THEY ARE EMERGENCY SHIPMENTS FROM THAILAND BASED STOCKS TO VIET-NAM SAYING THAT THE STORY IS INACCURATE INsofar AS IT IMPLIES ANY EMERGENCY SHIPMENTS FROM THAILAND TO SOUTH VIET-NAM FOR USE OF GVN ARMED FORCES. WE HAVE OBSERVED THAT STORY MAY WELL REFER TO ROUTINE SUPPLY FOR CAMBODIA, A LARGE PART OF WHICH, AS IT IS WELL KNOWN, IS SHIPPED TO PHNOM PENH VIA THE MEKONG RIVER.

3. IT WOULD BE HOPED THAT ALL "U.S. MILITARY SPOKESMEN" IN THIS AREA BE CAUTIONED ON THE RELEASE OR CONFIRMATION OF SPECULATIVE INQUIRIES WHICH CAN BE MISCONSTRUED AND THEREBY PREJUDICE CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION OF WHATEVER ACTION THE ADMINISTRATION MAY BE CONTEMPLATING FOR SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO CAMBODIA. CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE IS OBVIOUSLY A GREAT PREMIUM AT THE MOMENT FOR A TOTALLY COORDINATED PUBLIC AFFAIRS APPROACH AND WE BELIEVE SUCH STATEMENTS AND INTERPRETATIONS WILL BEST BE LEFT TO SUCH COORDINATION BETWEEN DEFENSE, STATE, AND WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMEN IN WASHINGTON. MARTIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, AMMUNITION, TRANSPORTATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON00341
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750010-0144
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750161/aaaacbx.d.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 JUL 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <12 NOV 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS SPECULATION ON EMERGENCY MUNITION SHIPMENTS TO VIET NAM.
TAGS: MASS, VS, CB
To: DOD STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006